

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An anti-theft device for a vehicle, comprising:  
an ignition key provided with a code including portions having different reflectivity to light;  
a reference code memorized in the vehicle; and  
a controller permitting a start of an engine when the code is judged to be identical with the reference code.

2. The anti-theft device for a vehicle according to Claim 1, further comprising code reading means for reading the code by reflective light from the code of the ignition key, the code reading means being provided at a key cylinder for starting the engine by insertion of the ignition key therein or near the key cylinder.

3. The anti-theft device for a vehicle according to Claim 2 further comprising:  
operation prohibition means for prohibiting a rotational operation of the key cylinder;  
and  
memory means for memorizing the code;  
wherein the controller includes control means for prohibiting the rotational operation of the key cylinder when information read by the code reading means and information memorized in the memory means are not identical and for allowing the rotational operation of the key cylinder when the information read by the code reading means and the information memorized in the memory means are identical.

4. The anti-theft device for a vehicle according to Claim 2 further comprising:  
detection means for detecting an insertion operation of the key into the key cylinder;  
wherein the reading of the code is performed by actuating the code reading means when the insertion operation is detected by the detection means.

5. The anti-theft device for a vehicle according to Claim 2, wherein the controller outputs an external report when information read by the code reading means and information memorized in the memory means are not identical for a predetermined number of times.

6. The anti-theft device for a vehicle according to Claim 2, wherein the controller controls the start of the engine.

7. An anti-theft device for a vehicle comprising:  
an ignition key provided with a code including portions having different reflectivity to light;  
a reference code memorized in the vehicle;  
wherein a start of an engine is allowed when the code is identical with the reference code; and  
a code reader configured to read the code by reflective light from the code of the ignition key, the code reader being provided at a key cylinder for starting the engine by insertion of the ignition key therein or near the key cylinder.

8. The anti-theft device for a vehicle according to Claim 7 further comprising:  
a lock mechanism for prohibiting a rotational operation of the key cylinder; and  
a memory configured to memorize the code;  
wherein the controller is configured to prohibit the rotational operation of the key cylinder when information read by the code reader and information memorized in the memory are not identical and to allow the rotational operation of the key cylinder when the information read by the code reader and the information memorized in the memory are identical.

9. The anti-theft device for a vehicle according to Claim 7 further comprising:  
a key detection switch for detecting an insertion of the key into the key cylinder;  
wherein the reading of the code is performed by actuating the code reader when the insertion operation is detected by the key detection switch.

10. The anti-theft device for a vehicle according to Claim 7, wherein the controller outputs an external report when information read by the code reader and information memorized in the memory are not identical for a predetermined number of times.

11. The anti-theft device for a vehicle according to Claim 7, wherein the controller controls the start of the engine.

12. A method for anti-theft for a vehicle, comprising steps of:  
detecting insertion of an ignition key;  
optically reading a code;  
comparing the read code and a reference code; and  
selectively allowing or prohibiting a start of an engine based upon the comparison.

13. The method for anti-theft for the vehicle according to Claim 12, wherein an emergency is reported to an outside when a state of prohibiting the start of the engine is repeated for a predetermined number of times.

14. The method for anti-theft for the vehicle according to Claim 12, wherein the step of optically reading the code includes illuminating and capturing an image of the code.